

Kaffeklatsch Notes

Oct 8, 2020

Dr. Henry Harder

Vice-Provost Indigenous Initiatives

Participants :40

Dr. Henry Harder, Vice-Provost of Indigenous Initiatives.

Dr. Harder is the first Vice-Provost appointed to this new portfolio. He is an Indigenous Scholar, retired professor and past Chair of the School of Health Sciences.

He has made a significant contribution to UNBC during his career and held the Dr. Donald B. Rix BC Leadership Chair in Aboriginal Environmental Health. Dr. Harder's research interests focused on Indigenous health, environmental health, disability issues, workplace mental health, and suicide prevention.

The Office of Indigenous Initiatives serves as the central point of contact and coordination for Indigenous communities and partners across the North. It will provide support to faculty and staff as they respond to the Truth and Reconciliation's Call to Action and the UNBC Academic Action Plan.

Location Statement <https://www.unbc.ca/sites/default/files/sections/henry-harder/locationstatementhenryharder.pdf>

Worked with Carrier Sekani for 20 years, mostly doing suicide prevention.

Brand new - The Office of indigenous Initiatives has never existed at UNBC before. 2 years worth of to-do's from when the position was waiting to be filled.

Attitude of respect for Indigenous people, cultural practices, knowledge and territory.

Attitude of thankfulness

Focus on the positive news, especially regarding Covid in BC.

Aboriginal Service Plan <https://www.unbc.ca/sites/default/files/sections/aboriginal-resource-dati/march92020aboriginalserviceplanfinalsubmissiontotheministry.pdf>

Areas identified for focus:

- Faculty Outreach - “How do we indigenize teaching & the student experience?” - What is the best way to work with Faculty to do this – please let Henry know your ideas.
Henry.harder@unbc.ca
- Student Outreach – “How do we best reach out to students to assist with their success?” MOU with indigenous groups, already in place. Working with Bev Best for this.
- Community Outreach – “How do we help communities relate better to the communities and how do we **serve** those communities?”
- Administrative committees

Questions/Comments:

Importance of dialogue with communities and asking what they need from UNBC instead of telling them what they need. This is what it was like in the beginning. Respect, listening, collaboration, consultation.

There is an issue around support for students in the regions.....not just tech support. Is there a place for Faculty to report student needs/comments/requests?

Henry’s ideas around this are to have more points of access, elder on-site 3 days per week, have Faculty welcome the students into their classroom, thinking about how we communicate. How do we teach our courses while being aware that you are teaching from a certain perspective. Requires Faculty to think differently, in particular with language to be more welcoming & inclusive. Willingness to consider other perspectives.

Suggestion from a Faculty Member: Include texts that are from Aboriginal perspectives. Different modes of approaching texts – what is a ‘text’ - can it be oral stories? There might be a place for Faculty sharing resources – what works well, what doesn’t work well, what can be changed?

There used to be a First Nations forum where communities came and told us what they needed from us. It doesn’t have to be in PG, we could maybe go as guests.

The First Nations Centre is trying to provide as many supports as possible and would be happy to address any list from faculty on student needs. many more challenges now reaching students and getting to know them and their needs.

Amelia Kaiser, Student Affairs: I am also really open to hearing from people if supports are missing and my team can contribute in some way. We always welcome ideas, concerns and feedback.

Henry has been floating an idea for a Faculty support brainstorming group. Start with a webinar to raise what the issues are, and then collectively work on them.

Penina, PhD student at UNBC: request from the community – helping them create a research ethics guide that will protect our traditional knowledge and ensure that when researchers come in they are being reciprocal. Would like to do a test run with UNBC & TRU. Also has an idea for supporting Indigenous graduate students – organizing a weekly check in so they can connect with others and help each other. Mock defenses, skill building, support each other in grad studies. Bev Best responded: we used to have SAGE (graduate student support) out of the First Nations Studies...not sure what happened to that? Tina Fraser was in charge. Jesse King would be happy to help with SAGE as well.

Research Ethics Board: Henry would be happy to help with that as he chaired the REB for quite a few years, and Davina Banner-Lukaris is the current REB chair.

Jesse King: Dr. Harder I wanted to acknowledge you for your mentorship and for taking on these initiatives. FNST 300 Research Method and Design students are here today which is my way of making space for these conversations in my class

It would be wonderful if we could revive SAGE at UNBC

I find shifting to the virtual environment has opened up space for dialogue in learning

Ross Hoffman: Noting over 30 people here today – a variety of Students, Faculty, Administrators – that is a good sign that people at UNBC are willing to come and listen to this type of talk about the Indigenization of studies at UNBC.

What would be a good place to start learning about the history of the Lheidli T'enneh First Nation? Contact the First Nations Centre at UNBC, or several resource books at the Centre. Visit with the elder on Mon/Tues at the FNC. The Exploration Place has an extensive knowledge on the Lheidli T'enneh. theexplorationplace.com/galleries-3/first-nations-gallery

Marcel is around for Virtual Talking Circles weekly: unbc.ca/events/54758/virtual-talking-circle-elder-marcel-gagnon and you could contact: spencer.hammond@unbc.ca

Henry: We want to also talk about how much knowledge people have, what are the gaps?

Carol Johnson: I sit on a board with UVIC as FN student rep, for Mental Health and FNST. We are in the final process of final reports. These go out to 67 univ. across Canada, however, I would be willing to share the work throughout the process.

For anyone that is looking to learn more about overall concepts. BC Campus has some amazing guides that are thoughtfully designed. Check them out here. bccampus.ca/projects/indigenization

<https://www.theexplorationplace.com/galleries-3/first-nations-gallery> History of local area